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ABSTRACT

The Displaced Homemakers Network surveyed its 425 programs in the winter of 1985 to determine the extent and nature of services to displaced homemakers under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). Also sought was information about the barriers to JTPA that kept program operators from bidding successfully for contracts. Finally, the survey collected information to find out if programs' level of involvement in their local JTPA scenes could be related to having a JTPA contract. Some of the key findings were the following: (1) 61 programs (about one-third of the approximately 40 percent that replied to the survey) had 80 JTPA contacts; (2) typical JTPA projects enroll 1 to 20 displaced homemakers; (3) a wide range of services were being provided by projects serving displaced homemakers, with the greatest concentration in pre-employment activities and vocational training; (4) more than half of the 80 contracts made provisions for supportive services, mainly child care and transportation costs; (5) much of the vocational training offered by JTPA projects was in one of three areas: clerical/office skills/work processing, health care, and nontraditional occupations; (6) programs most often used Title IIA funds; (7) the 10 percent window for serving persons who face barriers to employment was being used to enroll displaced homemakers; (8) the two reasons most frequently cited for not having a JTPA contract were that information was lacking and that homemakers were not a targeted population; and (9) knowledge of and involvement in the local JTPA scene was positively related to having a JTPA contact. (KC)

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Is the Job Training Partnership Act Training Displaced Homemakers?

A Technical Report on Services to Displaced Homemakers Under JTPA

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Displaced Homemakers Network

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October, 1985

Is The Job Training Partnership Act Training Displaced Homemakers?

A Technical Report on Services To Displaced Homemakers Under JTPA

Executive Summary

Under a grant from the Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, the Displaced Homemakers Network surveyed its programs in the winter of 1985 to determine the extent and nature of services to displaced homemakers under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). Also sought was information about the barriers to JTPA which kept program operators from bidding successfully for contracts. Finally, the survey collected information to find out if programs' level of involvement in their local JTPA scenes could be related to having a JTPA contract. The key findings are presented below.

- Of the 425 programs contacted by the Displaced Homemakers Network, 184 sent in completed surveys. Of this number, 61 programs reported a total of 80 JTPA contracts.

- The typical JTPA project enrolls 1-20 displaced homemakers.

- A wide range of services is being provided by projects serving displaced homemakers, with the greatest concentration in pre-employment activities. The second most frequently cited service area was vocational training.

- Fifty-five of the 80 contracts made provisions for supportive services, mainly child care and transportation costs.

- Much of the vocational training offered by JTPA projects was in one of three areas: clerical/office skills/word processing, health care and nontraditional occupations.

- A slight majority of the entered employment rates used as performance standards were higher than the performance standard set by the Secretary of Labor, while the required cost per entered employment was much lower for the great majority of contracts. Average wage-at-placement figures were somewhat suppressed, perhaps reflective of training programs which prepare women for entry-level, minimum-wage jobs.

- The majority of contracts were for less than $60,000. Although all possible sources of JTPA funding were tapped by displaced homemaker service providers, the most frequently tapped was Title IIA.

- The 10 percent window for serving individuals who face barriers to employment is being used to enrolled displaced homemakers, sometimes because they are included in a generally category of the "not economically disadvantaged" and sometimes because the SDA had named displaced homemakers as a target population. A problem related to the use of the 10 percent window is that some states' definitions of "displaced homemakers" exclude many clients who are generally considered to be displaced homemakers.

- The two reasons most frequently cited as causes for not having a JTPA contract are (1) Lack of information--The program was not sufficiently tied into the local JTPA system to get involved in bidding for a contract, and (2) Displaced homemakers are not targeted--The PIC was not funding programs for special populations but, instead, was "mainstreaming" service delivery. Other reasons commonly named were that PICs were funding vocational training, which the program did not want to provide; displaced homemakers were not being served under the 10 percent window; programs could not wait until placing clients in jobs to be reimbursed for services; community-based organizations were not receiving contracts; and displaced homemakers were not able to meet income eligibility guidelines.

- Knowledge of and involvement in the local JTPA scene appears to be positively related to having a JTPA contract. Compared with non-contractors, contractors were more likely to be involved in such ways as submitting comments on the local job training plan and being represented at PIC meetings.

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations.....iv

Introduction..... 1

Chapter I. Description of JTPA Contracts for Serving Displaced Homemakers..... 3

Chapter II. Why Programs Do Not Have JTPA Contracts.....15

Chapter III. Programs' Involvement in the Local JTPA Scene.....22

Bibliography.....27

List of Illustrations

Figure 1. Total Number of Women Served..... 4

Figure 2. Number of Displaced Homemakers Served..... 4

Figure 3. Women Served by Contract..... 5

Table 1. Services Provided..... 6

Table 2. Entered Employment Rate Used as a Performance Standard..... 9

Table 3. Average Wage at Placement Used as a Performance Standard.....10

Table 4. Cost Per Placement Used as a Performance Standard.....10

Figure 4. Dollar Amount of Contract.....12

Figure 5. Source of Funding.....12

Table 5. Reasons for Lack of JTPA Contract.....15

Table 6. Has your program had access to a copy of the local job training plan?.....22

Table 7. Does your program know the procedures for filing comments about the job training plan?.....23

Table 8. Has your program made oral or written comments about the job training plan?.....23

Table 9. Is your program aware of the PIC's planning calendar and schedule of activities?.....23

Table 10. Has your program been represented at PIC hearings and meetings?.....24

Table 11. Is a displaced homemaker or an advocate on the PIC?.....24

Is the Job Training Partnership Act

Training Displaced Homemakers?

A Technical Report on Services
To Displaced Homemakers Under JTPA

Introduction

> "We have had wonderful help from our administrator of JTPA funds in our SDA--no complaints."
> from an Oklahoma displaced homemaker program

> "JTPA is a poor excuse for an employment and training program."
> from a women's employment program in Washington State

Will the real Job Training Partnership Act please stand up? That is exactly what the Displaced Homemakers Network set out to do--to coax this lavishly praised, harshly critized federal job training program to stand up and be recognized for what it is. Expressed less metaphorically, our goal was simply to determine how well the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) was working for displaced homemakers.

The Displaced Homemakers Network (DHN), with over 400 programs serving displaced homemakers in its network, was in an excellent position to collect this information. Under a grant from the Women's Bureau, United States Department of Labor, DHN surveyed its programs in the winter of 1985 to determine the extent and nature of services to displaced homemakers under JTPA, as well as the problem areas which have worked against their benefiting from this job training program. The results of the survey, augmented by information gathered at state and regional displaced homemaker conferences and through individual contact with program operators from across the country, are presented in this report.

Is the Job Training Partnership Act Training Displaced Homemakers? is intended for two audiences. The first is policy analysts, who will find in the report a national perspective on JTPA and displaced homemakers. Furthermore, to the extent that the situation of displaced homemakers is similar to that of other women who need job training--and their situations contain many similarities--readers will be able to broaden their understanding of how well JTPA is working for women. The second audience is displaced homemaker service providers. The report is filled with suggestions, some explicit and others implicit, about how to write a contract and operate a JTPA program for displaced homemakers.

The report is organized into three chapters. The first of these describes the 80 JTPA contracts which program operators reported in the survey. Chapter II discusses the comments of the 123 service providers who talked about why they did not have JTPA contracts. In Chapter III, the involvement in the local JTPA scene by these two groups--contractors and non-contractors--is compared and analyzed. Taken together, the three chapters show both the strengths and weakness of the federal job training system as it relates to displaced homemakers.

The Job Training Partnership Act has been in effect for two years, and for two years a debate has waged as to its effectiveness. Given the findings presented in this report, such a debate is understandable. As the following discussion makes clear, for displaced homemakers, JTPA holds promise and problems in equal measure.

Chapter I

Description of JTPA Contracts for Serving Displaced Homemakers

Background

The information in this section comes from 61 employment and counseling programs which serve displaced homemakers as their only clients or as one of several populations, such as re-entry women. These programs reported a total of 80 JTPA contracts. Of the 425 programs contacted by DHN, 184 returned their surveys. This means that 33 percent of the responding programs were able to say that they had successfully bid for a contract. A success rate of 33 percent is remarkable--until one recalls that successful bidders are, perhaps, more likely to complete the survey and that another 241 programs were not heard from at all. Still, the important numbers to remember for this section are 61 programs which reported 80 contracts. The reader will note that the total number of responses varies, as indicated by the "N" in each figure and table; this inconsistency occurs because all items were not completed on many surveys.

Level of Service Delivery

Are displaced homemakers being served in JTPA programs? The answer is, "yes, but...." Yes, they are participating in the job training programs, but they represent a small proportion of the women served. Consider these figures: One half of the contracts served 1 - 50 women (displaced homemakers and women who were not displaced homemakers), but in slightly over half of all projects, only 1 - 20 displaced homemakers were enrolled. Thus, while at first glance the figures on the number of women served would indicate a high level of access to JTPA programs by displaced homemakers, closer inspection reveals that most projects enroll under 20 displaced homemakers, and over three-fourths serve 50 or fewer. The contrast between total number of women served and number of displaced homemakers served is evident in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1
Total Number of Women Served (N=54)

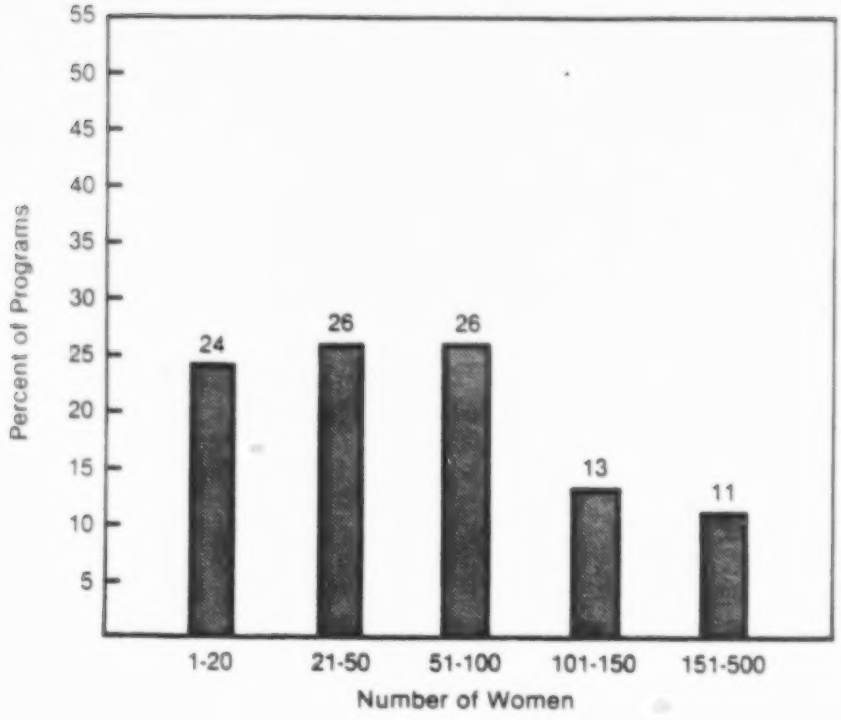
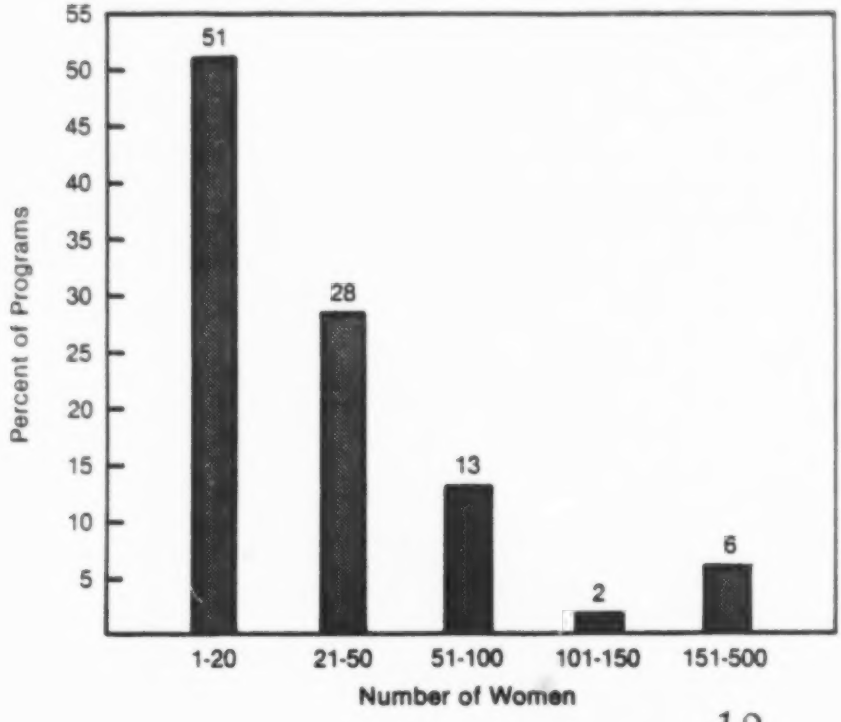
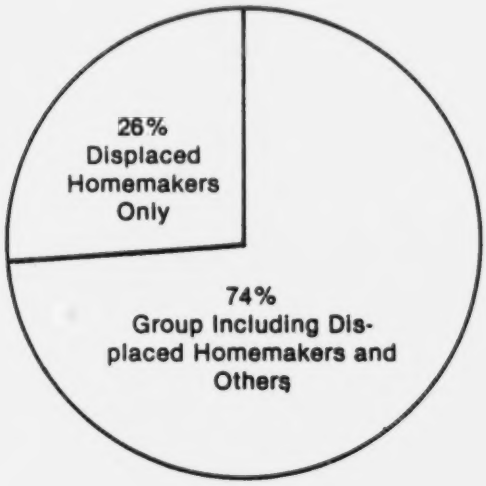


Figure 2
Number of Displaced Homemakers Served (N=47)



DHN's survey findings indicate that program operators who want to ensure their ability to serve displaced homemakers can go one of two routes, both contractual. First, it is possible to contract to serve only displaced homemakers: 26 percent of the projects described in DHN's survey did this. (See Figure 3.) Second, if the Private Industry Council (PIC) does not want to write a contract for serving this one population, it may be open to having the contract stipulate that a certain number or percentage of all participants be displaced homemakers; DHN's survey revealed that over one fourth of the contracts included language to that effect.

Figure 3
Women Served by Contracts (N=72)



Service Mix

What services are being provided to displaced homemakers? According to our survey, almost all of the activities allowable under JTPA are being offered in projects that serve displaced homemakers, with the greatest concentration in pre-employment activities. (See Table 1.) The majority of the 80 contracts made provisions for job counseling, job-readiness skills (such as work habits), job development and vocational exploration. The high level of activity in these areas is encouraging because displaced homemakers, who may never have worked in the labor force before or who may be re-entering it after a twenty-year hiatus, need assistance in their transition from "home-work" to "paid work." Furthermore, these findings offset, to a certain extent, JTPA's reputation for not making such services available.

Table 1
Services Provided

Number Reporting Service	
	Pre-employment Activities
67	Job counseling
66	Job-readiness skills (work habits, etc.)
57	Vocational exploration
60	Job development
	Vocational Training
43	Skills training (in a classroom setting)
27	On-the-job training
12	Work experience
	Education
29	Basic education (reading, writing, math)
8	English as a second language
31	G.E.D.
	Other
45	Supportive services
15	Needs-based payments
37	Outreach
45	Follow-up activities
18	Other

The second most frequently cited service area was vocational training. Forty-three contracts included skills training in a classroom setting, and 27 included on-the-job training (OJT). While there are some questions about the suitability of OJT for displaced homemakers, as will be discussed in Chapter II, program operators should not automatically eliminate it as a possible program activity. This is because research has shown that the entered employment rate, or job placement rate, is higher for persons completing OJT than it is for persons completing classroom training or other program activities. The Job Training Longitudinal Survey (JTLS) data for the first nine months of JTPA, which were prepared by Westat for the Employment and Training Administration, United States Department of Labor, show that 81 percent of men who terminated--that is, completed-- OJT and 80 percent of women who terminated OJT were placed in jobs.[1] These numbers compare favorably to the corresponding figures for persons completing classroom training: only 65 percent of men and 52 percent of women were placed in jobs. Thus, it would appear that all other conditions being equal, program operators concerned with placing displaced homemakers in jobs would do well to consider incorporating OJT into their contracts.[2]

[1]U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, A Statistical Picture of Adult Women in JTPA: The First Nine Months, n.d.

[2]It is interesting to note that the JTLS data also show that men are concentrated in OJT, and women, in classroom training.

Finally, in addition to pre-employment activities and vocational training, survey respondents also reported significant program activity in the education category, with 31 contracts including G.E.D. preparation and 29 contracts providing for basic, or remedial, education. Also, many JTPA projects included outreach activities (37 contracts) and follow-up activites (45 contracts).

In sum, what all of this means for displaced homemaker service providers is that JTPA funds can indeed be used for providing the program components which displaced homemakers need in order to become job-ready and, hopefully, employed. In meeting with individuals from across the country and upon reading comments on the surveys, DHN staff were given the impression that many programs were too discouraged about JTPA even to submit a proposal for funding; they believed that what their clients needed was not what the PICs were interested in funding. And, to a certain extent, their perception is accurate. As a major study of Title IIA conducted by Grinker, Walker & Associates found, Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) are contracting for services at varying levels. For example, while 100 percent of the SDAs surveyed said they were writing contracts for OJT and classroom training (nationwide spending 39 percent and 32 percent of JTPA funds, respectively, on these activities), only 70 percent indicated they had contractual arrangements for job clubs and direct placement activities (and nationwide only 15 percent of JTPA funds were allocated for such job search assistance).[3] Thus, it is certainly true that it would be more difficult for program operators to obtain JTPA funding for important pre-employment activities or remedial education--the money just is not there in many localities. Still, as DHN's survey indicates, JTPA funding has been and can be used to provide the array of services needed by displaced homemakers. Perhaps our finding concerning the service mix can be thought of as "qualified optimism."

Supportive Services

Every discussion of training programs for women, especially low income women, eventually and inevitably turns to the provision of supportive services. Obviously, lack of child care, transportation and other supportive services can prohibit many women from participating in the very training programs designed to help them achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Of the 80 JTPA contracts reported in our survey, only 25 made no provision for any supportive services. Twenty-seven contracts included child care, and 32 contracts allowed for transportation costs. In the "other" category, many programs reported funding for medical care (eye exams and glasses, emergency care, pre-employment physicals), clothing for job searches and uniforms for jobs, rent and emergency housing, and counseling. Also, 15 projects had funds for needs-based payments.

3 Gary Walker, Hilary Feldstein and Katherine Solow, An Independent Sector Assessment of The Job Training Partnership Act, Phase II: Initial Implementation (Grinker, Walker & Associates, 1985), p.19.

payments. Interestingly, 6 survey responses indicated that the 15 percent limitation on wages, supportive services and allowances had been waived in their SDAs--a finding which closely corresponds to Grinker, Walker's finding that less than one tenth of SDAs had sought such waivers.[4]

How can these statistics be evaluated? Clearly, the most desirable finding would have been that 100 percent of the contracts made provision for a wide array of supportive services. However, the actual figures are not unexpected, given reports of SDAs' spending only 7 or 8 percent of the possible 15 percent of funds available under Title IIA, the title for which the largest pot of money is available and from which most of the contracts described here drew their support. Like the preceding evaluation of the service mix, the review here is "limited good news." Program operators should be encouraged to seek contracts that include provisions for supportive services--many displaced homemaker service providers have been successful in this effort--but good results are not guaranteed.

Occupation

Of the programs which reported providing vocational training, most offered training in one of three areas. Most frequently cited was clerical/office skills/word processing training; 19 contracts so reported. In another 16 cases, the training was in a health care profession, from nurse's aide to LPN, with the less skilled jobs more frequently reported. Ten projects trained their participants in nontraditional occupations, including construction, auto mechanics and carpentry. Finally, 4 projects prepared women to work in retail and 4, in the computer field. Several other occupations were named by one or two projects.

With the exception of the training in nontraditional fields, most of the JTPA vocational training for displaced homemakers appears to be highly traditional--clerical or health care. One displaced homemaker program which did not have a JTPA contract commented upon this situation, identifying the inherent problem:

> We referred very few clients because even with the training they could earn little more than AFDC and in one case a woman was worse off than being on welfare. Presently clients are referred but the approach is traditional jobs for women (low pay)--clerical, food service, retail, etc.

An Indiana displaced homemakers program reports a similar situation: "Some of the training is for jobs which turn out to be minimum-wage and part-time, such as a recent one in Telemarketing and Telecommunication--phone solicitation, in other words!"

[4] Walker, p.20.

In sum, anecdotal evidence and DHN's survey findings combine to sound a cautionary note. If displaced homemakers receive training for entry-level, low paying jobs with little opportunity for advancement---that is, for jobs that will not allow them to support themselves and their children--then the value of the training is limited. Perhaps one part of the solution is for contractors to push for longer-term training so that participants can receive training for more highly skilled and better paying jobs.

Performance Standards

DHN's findings on performance standards stipulated in contracts offered few surprises. The three performance standards reported were entered employment rate, wage at placement, and cost per placement, and for each, projects serving displaced homemakers produced outcomes that compare favorably with the performance standards issued by the Secretary of Labor.

Thirty-three contracts named the entered employment rate as a performance standard (See Table 2.) Nineteen projects reported their specific entered employment rate. Of these, the majority (68 percent) had to reach entered employment rates of 50 to 69 percent. Interestingly, 58 percent of the contracts had to meet placement rates considerably higher than the standard of 55 percent set by the Secretary of Labor for Program Year 1984.

Table 2

Entered Employment Rate Used as a Standard Performance (N=19)

Entered Employment Rate (%)	Percent of Programs
49 or lower	11
50 - 59	31
60 - 69	37
70 - 79	5
80 or higher	16
Total	100

Another performance standard to be met by 31 projects was average wage at placement. (See Table 3.) The Secretary of Labor set this standard at $4.91 for SDAs. Of the 28 projects which reported their specific wage goals, almost one third said their contracts called for an average wage at placement of between $4.51 and $5.00. Only 4 contracts (or 14 percent of those reporting) had average wage-at-placement rates need to be understood in terms of the training offered to displaced homemakers. As was discussed above, they are being

prepared for entry-level, minimum-wage jobs, so their relatively low earnings are to be expected as a natural product of the system. Even so, the programs serving these women are doing a good job. The JTLS data for the first nine months that JTPA was in operation show that the average wage at placement for all adults was $4.77-- $5.14 for men and $4.36 for women.

Table 3

Average Wage at Placement Used as a Performance Standard (N=31)

Wage at Placement	Percent of Programs
$3.00 - 3.50	11
$3.51 - 4.00	14
$4.01 - 4.50	29
$4.51 - 5.00	32
$5.01 or higher	14
Total	100

Twenty-five contracts called for cost per entered employment as a performance standard. As Table 4 indicates, the overwhelming majority of projects had cost-per-entered-employment rates significantly below the $5,704 set as the standard by the Secretary of Labor. In fact, 45 percent were placing clients at a cost below $2,000.

Table 4

Cost Per Placement Used as a Performance Standard (N=25)

Cost Per Placement	Percent of Programs
$ 0 - 999	18
$1000 - 1999	27
$2000 - 2999	14
$3000 - 3999	9
$4000 - 4999	18
$5000 - 5999	0
$6000 - 6999	0
$7000 or higher	14
Total	100

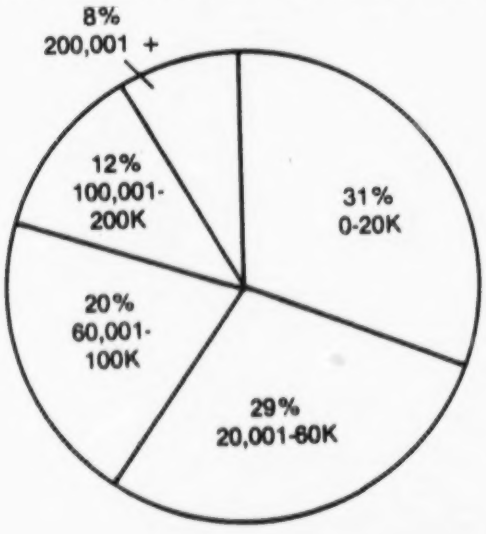
The analysis of the performance standards is revealing. It shows that program operators can serve a "high risk" population and still meet--and surpass--the performance standards issued by the Secretary of Labor. The pairing of the findings concerning average wage at placement and cost per entered employment suggest something further. The actual wages are low, for the most part, because of the type of training being provided, and the cost-per-placement figures are far below the Secretary's allowable $5,704. Why not invest more money per client and offer more extensive training that can lead to genuine economic self-sufficiency? That should be, after all, the net impact of JTPA.

If there is a fallacy in this reasoning process, it is that it does not account for PICs' predilection for short-term, low-cost training, as documented by the Grinker, Walker study. Program operators face a considerable challenge in convincing their PIC to sacrifice low cost-per-entered-employment rates by underwriting somewhat more expensive training that will have a long-term payoff. Although this may be difficult, it is not impossible. A few programs in DHN's survey were able to report a couple of innovations, such as not having a performance-based contract. Other programs have recommended a system of "joint venturing" whereby the displaced homemaker program provides the counseling and pre-employment activities which are its special strengths (and to which no placement goals are attached) and then sends its clients to a sub-contractor for vocational skills training (at which point placement goals become more appropriate). In other words, performance-based contracting can be adapted to meet the real needs of displaced homemakers--but such adaptions must win the approval of largely conservative PICs.

Amount and Source of Funding

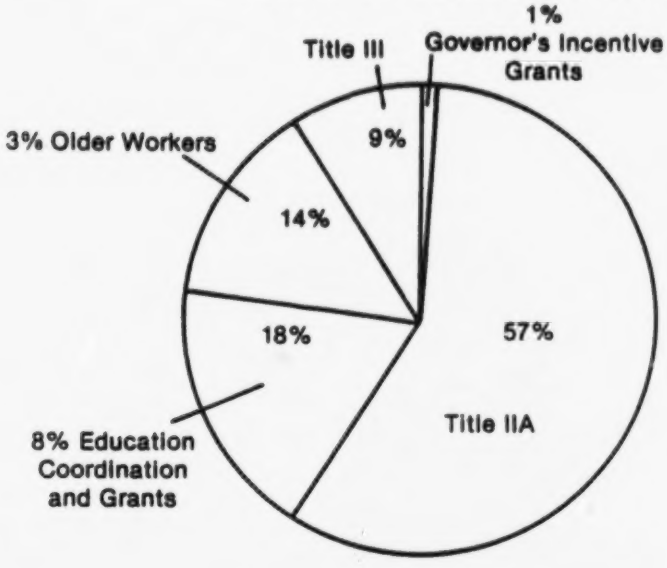
As Figure 4 shows, the majority of the contracts reported in the survey (60 percent) were for less than $60,000, and another 20 percent were for amounts between $60,001 and $100,000. These relatively low figures, in conjunction with the low cost-per-entered-employment rates, reinforce JTPA's image as a low-cost operation. (They also raise the issue of "creaming," which will be discussed later.)

Figure 4
Dollar Amount of Contract (N=59)



The titles or portions of the state allotment used to fund services to displaced homemakers are depicted in Figure 5. Of the 76 contracts for which this information is available, 43 (or 57 percent) received Title IIA funding. A distant second was the 8 percent money for state education coordination and grants, which was the source of 14 contracts. Significantly, all of the possible sources of funding were tapped for providing services to displaced homemakers--good news for program operators who are willing to explore every possible avenue.

Figure 5
Source of Funding (N=76)*



*Total does not equal 100% due to rounding.

To a certain extent, the availability of the state-administered resources (the 8 percent, 3 percent and 6 percent monies, as opposed to Title IIA, which is primarily the responsibility of the local SDA) varies with the state. Wisconsin, with its 25 percent setaside for displaced homemakers out of the 8 percent money, is a good case in point. Another example occurs with Title III. Florida's state plan earmarks 10 percent of its Title III money for serving the long-term unemployed for displaced homemakers and sets the cost-per- placement rate almost $2500 higher than for other Title III participants because, as the plan notes, displaced homemakers need more extensive training and services. Given this commitment at the state level, it is not surprising to find that several Title III contracts for training displaced homemakers in Florida have been issued. This situation stands in contrast to the one implicit in an Indiana program operator's remark that "We have been told that displaced homemakers cannot be considered 'dislocated workers' because the job is not obsolete--a displaced homemaker 'can always get married again.' Is any further comment necessary?"

Clearly the major source of funding is Title IIA, but program operators should know that they can pursue other sources.

The 10 percent Window and Definition of Displaced Homemaker

DHN was particularly interested in the responses to the question about the use of the 10 percent window. Under Title IIA, SDAs may use 10 percent of their funds to serve individuals who are not economically disadvantaged but do face special barriers to employment; displaced homemakers are named in the statute as one population that can be targeted. The popular understanding is that SDAs are choosing not to use this provision for serving special populations, but are instead reserving it for cases of audit exceptions; that is, should the auditor conclude that a particular trainee was not economically disadvantaged, that person's slot could be reassigned to the 10 percent window.

DHN's survey yielded results that can be interpreted as "somewhat good news." Of the 43 contracts reported as being funded under Title IIA, slightly over half (51 percent) were serving displaced homemakers through the 10 percent window. More specifically, 21 of the 43 contracts (49 percent) were enrolling displaced homemakers because they were economically disadvantaged, 1 contract (2 percent) drew upon the 10 percent funds exclusively, and the remaining 21 contracts (49 percent) enrolled displaced homemakers using either the income eligibility criteria or the 10 percent window criteria.

Upon reading these findings, program operators may be initially encouraged to learn that displaced homemakers have been targeted for the 10 percent window in at least a few of the almost 600 SDAs. However, these statistics are a bit misleading. DHN contacted the programs which said they had been using the 10 percent window and asked them to explain the situation. In about half of the cases, SDAs had in fact named displaced homemakers as a population to be served under the 10 percent window. In the other half of the cases, displaced homemakers were included in a general category of the "not economically disadvantaged." In other words, these SDAs made arrangements for providing training to populations facing employment barriers in general, but not to displaced homemakers *per se*.

What this means for would-be contractors is that if they are not able to win the PIC's support for serving displaced homemakers through the 10 percent window, they should try, perhaps in coalition with other groups, to have PICs earmark 10 percent of the Title IIA money for a general category of populations that are not economically disadvantaged but do face barries to employment. Furthermore, the objective is not to gain PICs' oral support but to have them state in their local job training plans that the 10 percent money will be used in a specified fashion.

Chapter II

Why Programs Do Not Have JTPA Contracts

Background

Of the 184 programs which completed surveys, 123 reported not having a JTPA contract. Of these 123, only 12 had bid for a contract. This chapter reviews the reasons given by the programs for not having a JTPA contract. Table 5 presents these reasons in summary form. Because respondents often gave more than one reason, the total number responses is greater than the number of programs which completed this section of the survey.

Table 5
Reasons for Lack of JTPA Contract

Number Reporting Reason	Reason
39	Lack of information--Our program is not sufficiently tied into the local JTPA system to get involved in bidding for a contract.
38	Displaced homemakers not targeted--PICs are not funding programs for special populations; instead, they are "mainstreaming" service delivery.
31	Services being funded--PICs are giving contracts for vocational skills training, which is not our program's focus.
29	Eligibility--Displaced homemakers are not being served under the 10 percent window for people who face barriers to employment.
22	Performance-based contracts--Our program cannot wait until placing clients in jobs to be reimbursed for services.
20	Community-based organizations--CBOs are not receiving contracts.
20	Eligibility--Displaced homemakers are not qualifying as economically disadvantaged.

16 Performance standards--The job-placement rate is too high.

9 Services being funded--Our program did not choose to include on-the-job training.

4 Performance standards--The cost-per-placement rate is too low for our program.

Lack of Information

The reason most commonly given for not having a JTPA contract is "lack of information." Thirty-nine programs responded that they were not sufficiently tied into their local JTPA system even to get involved in the bidding process.

This concern was voiced both by programs which tried unsuccessfully to get information from their PICs and by programs which appear to be completely removed from their local job training system. Comments from the first group range from "very frustrating getting information from and about JTPA" to "a great cloud obfuscates the process in this county." One New Jersey program operator told the DHN staff that she had contacted her local JTPA office four times over the course of two weeks and still had not had her telephone calls returned.

Other displaced homemaker service providers made remarks that indicate that there had been no communication at all between them and their PICs--if there was a federal job training program being operated locally, they certainly had not heard much about it. Reports a former CETA-funded program about her local job training program: "They are not informing us of their changes in programming and do not work with us." An Illinois program operator simply said, "I am not aware of how to bid for JTPA money." DHN's experience in conducting workshops on JTPA confirms this information gap. Many service providers do not know that displaced homemakers can be served using JTPA funds, much less how they can go about getting a contract.

Not Targeting Displaced Homemakers

Almost as many programs cited failure of their PICs to target displaced homemakers for services as named lack of information as the reason they did not have JTPA contract--38, to be exact. The problem appears to be two-fold. In many cases, PICs are choosing to "mainstream," that is, to contract for programs serving the general adult population rather than for special segments of it, a disadvantage for displaced homemakers, who often lack paid work experience and confidence. This finding corresponds to Grinker, Walker's conclusion that the targeting goals of the legislation "were generally not rigorously pursued, with the notable exception of welfare recipients."[5] They found that there were only "modest attempts to define or meet through special programming the needs of ... special

[5]Walker, p.83.

target groups."[6] Some analysts look to JTPA's overall low levels of funding as the culprit, reasoning that if more money were available, PICs would feel able to afford contracting for services to special populations, such as displaced homemakers, which sometimes require costlier programming. From the displaced homemaker service provider's point of view, there is little reason to submit a proposal for serving displaced homemakers if it is known that PICs are not interested in contracts for special populations.

A related problem is that target groups are sometimes in competition with each other. As one program operator in Georgia reported:

> During the conferences held to disseminate bidding information, the presenters indicated that the [area] had more than enough economically disadvantaged, unemployed youth to serve and proposals to serve displaced homemakers exclusively would not be considered.

A West Virginia service provider said she is operating a program for women age 17 to 21 "because politically that is all the Council will fund. We will try to get something ordered for older women next year."

Services Being Funded

The third most frequently cited reason for lack of a JTPA contract was that PICs were writing contracts for vocational skills training, not for the program activities more commonly provided by displaced homemaker programs. Although some displaced homemaker programs do conduct skills training, many programs are neither equipped to nor interested in branching out into the vocational skills area. Thus, the PICs' focus on skills training necessarily results in fewer contracts to displaced homemaker programs. This means that JTPA funds are not available for providing other job-related skills, the very skills displaced homemakers need in order to profit from skills training and find jobs.

Eligibility

A major difficulty in some displaced homemakers' gaining access to JTPA programs, whether they are operated by displaced homemaker center or other agencies, is their inability to meet strict eligibility criteria. They can face one of two eligibility barriers.

First, the income guidelines for being certified as economically disadvantaged work against displaced homemakers' enrollment in JTPA programs. In assessing the income of potential participants, eligibility specialists look at the previous six months' income. Displaced homemakers, who have recently lost their source of income, may be literally penniless today, but have had more money five or six months ago. Unfortunately, they will be not considered economically disadvantaged according to JTPA's income eligibility formula.

[6] Walker, p.13.

Twenty programs cited income eligibility guidelines as the reason they did not have a JTPA contract. One program operator related this story:

> I had a woman in my office yesterday who is 36 years old with 4 children under the age of 7, unemployed 7 years, divorced 3 weeks, and may or may not receive regular, limited child support. She does not qualify for JTPA because of the 6 month rule....

The six-month rule does not make sense for this population. It serves only to lock out the very people who need and deserve job training opportunities.

A second barrier to displaced homemakers' participation in JTPA programs, one cited by 29 survey respondents, is the limited use of the 10 percent window, which was designed for enrolling people who would not be able to qualify as economically disadvantaged. Even if PICs do want to use the window for serving displaced homemakers, another problem can arise--the state definition of displaced homemaker.

When states define "displaced homemaker," the definition may serve to exclude members of this population which common sense would tell us are in fact displaced homemakers. In Kentucky, for instance, the definition states that a displaced homemaker is 40 years old or older. As one program operator explains, "The 40 year age limitation is killing us." Another displaced homemaker service provider says that because of this restrictive definition, she uses the "re-entrant woman" category, for which the definition is broader, to enroll displaced homemakers.

In New Jersey, programs find that the criterion of "has not worked in a year" creates a barrier between the displaced homemaker and JTPA programs. A woman desperate to feed herself and her family will find some employment, even if it is temporary work below the minimum wage. Given this narrow definition of the term "displaced homemaker," it is not surprising that one New Jersey county employment service reports that the window has never been used.

Contractors in Georgia face the same problem. One service provider said that a client she had sent to the state Department of Labor to be certified was judged ineligible because she had worked three weeks in the last year. This contractor said that although the primary focus of her project was to have been on displaced homemakers, finding displaced homemakers eligible under the state definition proved so difficult that the program was ultimately opened up to other women.

In Wisconsin, another problem has surfaced. Part of the state definition stipulates that the displaced homemaker either (1) has been dependent on public assistance or the income of another family member, but is no longer supported by that income or (2) is receiving public

assistance because of dependent children in the home. There is no room in this definition for 55-year-old displaced homemaker who is a general welfare recipient. Advocates are now hard at work trying to having part (2) changed to "is receiving public assistance."

Two Alabama service providers contributed strikingly similar assessments of the situation: "The restrictive JTPA definition of displaced homemaker would force us to [turn] away many who would be excellent prospects." In a near echo of her comments, a fellow Alabamian says, "Eligibility requirements for displaced homemaker programs funded by JTPA are so restrictive that many people who could benefit from our program would be considered ineligible for training."

Does this mean that the 10 percent window is so awash with problems that it is not a viable means for funding programs that serve displaced homemakers? One hopes not, because unless the six-month rule is adjusted to suit the special circumstances of displaced homemakers, use of the 10 percent window will remain an important potential avenue into JTPA. States need to review their definitions of displaced homemaker and use common sense to revise them so that people who clearly are displaced homemakers can be served. For example, instead of stating that the displaced homemaker has not worked outside of the home for a specified number of years, the definition could say that this person has worked primarily in the home without remuneration.

Performance-based Contracts

Twenty-two programs said the reason they do not have a contract is that it would require them to wait until placing their clients in jobs to be reimbursed for their services. The "serve now, be paid later" method is particularly tough on the cash flow of community-based organizations. Several survey respondents, however, indicated that they had overcome this problem by entering into progress payment arrangements. At certain benchmarks, programs receive partial payment, generally with a sizable payment held until placement of clients. Payments are often made in three stages at points such as enrollment, completion of training and job placement.

Community-based Organizations

The role of community-based organizations (CBOs) in employment and training has diminished since 1980. Under JTPA, their reduced involvement is linked to several factors: a decrease or elimination of outreach and counseling activities, which are CBOs' strength, in order to lower administrative costs; the substitution of other contractors for CBOs; and some CBOs' disinclination to become involved with JTPA based on their belief that they could not meet JTPA's placement and cost standards while serving their chosen clientele. For the initial operation period of JTPA, 62 percent of SDAs surveyed by Grinker, Walker reported no role or a modest role for CBOs in their areas.[7]

[7]Walker, p.28.

Thus, it was not unexpected to learn, as DHN's survey revealed, that 20 programs that serve displaced homemakers said they did not have JTPA contracts because CBOs in their area were not receiving contracts.

Performance Standards

According to 20 programs in our survey, a main reason for lack of JTPA contracts is the difficulty of meeting performance standards. Sixteen programs said the placement rate was too high, and 4 said the cost-per-placement was too low for their program.

Do these responses signal some problem with displaced homemaker service providers? Not at all. Rather, they point to the widely discussed phenomenom of "creaming," selecting as participants those people who will be most easily--that is, quickly and cheaply--placed in the jobs. The culprits are the high placement and low cost-per-placement standards which, according to Grinker, Walker, were cited by 80 percent of the sampled SDAs as "critical factors" in planning program activities for JTPA's transitional year.[8] The effect of performance standards has been that SDAs have favored short-term, low-cost training useful for persons who are nearly job-ready and therefore need fewer and more limited services. Obviously, this approach is not appropriate for displaced homemakers whose last education and training experience was many years ago and who often need a wide range of services, including counseling and supportive services. As one Florida program operator summarized the situation, "The training program of JTPA is insufficient for displaced homemakers, who need more than one day for job entry (employment) skills and no support and no emotional help."

Many displaced homemakers are "screened out" through testing and prerequisites. A project director from New Jersey explains:

> Our experience is that those individuals who are most in need of training and basic skills remediation are eliminated during screening. The testing procedures used in [this county] include the Table D level. Only those who are already academically prepared can do well on that test. Failure to attain certain levels eliminates individuals from classroom training. For someone who has been out of school for a while, it is difficult to obtain high scores on a test, especially in math and grammar.

The reading and math requirements were identified as barriers by several survey respondents. Also criticized were typing skills prerequisites which served to screen out displaced homemakers. While one respondent said that a training program required knowledge of the typewriter keyboard, another explained that a two-day word processing program demanded a typing rate of 35 words per minute.

[8]Walker, p.iii.

So long as PICs' focus on ensuring low cost and high placement rates continues, it will remain difficult to serve individuals who are "most in need" and who need to receive services in order to become job-ready. At lease one PIC seems to have reached this conclusion also. A JTPA contractor from the State of Washington wrote that "At this time our JTPA funding allows about 8-12 weeks of training with very high placement goals--they are beginning to agree that this is a cotton candy approach to training and we are strongly encouraging them to go for longer training."

On-the-Job Training

In explaining why they did not have a JTPA contract, 9 programs said that it was because they did not want to offer on-the-job training (OJT), the program activity for which a good proportion of local funds were being targeted. While the benefits of OJT are well known, it should also be acknowledged that it is not always the most appropriate program design for some populations. One survey respondent described OJT's drawback this way:

> People accepted into OJT are expected to do much of the employer and business contact themselves. Since they cannot apply for advertised jobs, this means they must approach an employer "cold." Very few displaced homemakers have the confidence and negotiating skills to do this. If they could they would not need OJT in the first place.

A second problem with OJT programs is that participants are often required to provide their own transportation, which many displaced homemakers cannot do.

Other Barriers

Several programs said that they did not chose to bid on a JTPA contract for one of three reasons. First, some programs cited the amount of paperwork as the cause. Explained one person, "We have chosen not to seek JTPA monies for additional supportive services because the amount of funds would not justify the time required for developing and submitting the proposal and the reporting that would be required." A related reason, one that was cited by a few respondents, is that the program staff was too small to allocate the time and resources necessary for learning about JTPA and bidding for a contract. Finally, a couple programs said they did not seek out JTPA funding because their host institutions objected to the terms of the contract. In one case, the college did not support contracting because it had concerns about the placement rate. In another instance, the business office objected to the college's having to give up control in certain areas, such as screening clients for eligibility.

Chapter III

Programs' Involvement in the Local JTPA Scene

Background

One of the major impacts of the passage of JTPA has been the shift away from federal control to state and local control of the job training system. With this shift has come a greatly increased role for local communities, through their representatives on the PIC, to determine not only what kind of training is provided but also who provides it. Clearly, then, it is of upmost importance that organizations which seek JTPA contracts be well informed of their PICs' activities and that they maintain good working relationships with the PICs. Given this common sense premise, DHN surveyed its programs to find out if their level of knowledge of and involvement in their local JTPA scenes could be related to having a JTPA contract. Responses to eight questions by contractors and non-contractors showed that contractors were in fact more knowlegdeable and more involved than non-contractors.

Involvement in PICs' Activities

The local job training plan describes Title IIA activities, procedures for identifying and selecting participants, performance standards, procedures for selecting service providers and other topics which literally shape the form that JTPA will take locally. Obviously, individuals and organizations concerned with having displaced homemakers served through JTPA need to review the plan and, if necessary, submit comments on it. As Tables 6,7 and 8 reveal, programs with contracts are more involved in this process than are programs without contracts. Proportionately more of them report having had access to a copy of the plan (82 percent of contractors compared with 42 percent of non-contractors). Contractors are also more likely to know the procedures for filing comments on the plan (74 percent compared with 40 percent) and more likely to have made written or oral comments (55 percent versus 26 percent) than are non-contractors.

Table 6

Has your program had access to a copy of the local job training plan?

	Programs with Contracts		Programs without Contracts	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	46	82	49	42
No	10	18	68	58
Total	56	100	117	100

Table 7

Does your program know the procedures for filing comments about the job training plan?

	Programs with Contracts		Programs without Contracts	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	39	74	43	40
No	14	26	65	60
Total	53	100	108	100

Table 8

Has your program made oral or written comments in response to the job training plan?

	Programs with Contracts		Programs without Contracts	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	28	55	30	26
No	23	45	85	74
Total	51	100	115	100

Furthermore, programs with contracts are more aware of the PICs' schedule of activities. While only 28 percent of non- contractors reported knowing the PICs' planning calendar and schedule of activities, 74 percent of contractors so reported. (See Table 9.) More importantly, as Table 10 shows, 80 percent of programs with contracts were able to say that they had been represented at PIC hearings and meetings. In contrast, only 39 percent of programs without contracts reported that they were represented.

Table 9

Is your program aware of the PIC's planning calendar and schedule of activities?

	Program with Contracts		Programs without Contracts	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	40	74	32	28
No	14	26	81	72
Total	54	100	113	100

Table 10

Has your program been represented at PIC hearings and meetings?

	Programs with Contracts		Program without Contracts	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	44	80	45	39
No	11	20	69	61
Total	55	100	114	100

Relationship with PIC

Because the PIC is the key decision-making body when it comes to the expenditure of the largest portion of JTPA dollars, it would be helpful to have an advocate for displaced homemakers on the PIC. Table 11 suggests that the presence of a displaced homemaker or an advocate on the PIC is positively related to the PIC's writing contracts for serving displaced homemakers. That is, while only 14 percent of non-contractors reported an advocate on the PIC, 37 percent of contractors said displaced homemakers' interests were represented on their PICs. Of course, given the high percentage of non-contractors who did not know about the PIC representation, it is also possible that non-contractors' PICs had similar representation but that the non-contractors were just less likely realize it. In this case, these figures reinforce the notion that contractors knew much more about their local JTPA scene than did non-contractors.

Table 11

Is a displaced homemaker or an advocate on the PIC?

	Programs with Contracts		Programs without Contracts	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	19	37	16	14
No	22	42	47	41
Don't Know	11	21	52	45
Total	52	100	115	100

In other words, it pays to be involved. If a program wants to obtain a JTPA contract, it would do well to learn all it can about the operation of JTPA locally and to involve itself in its community's job training system. Granted, implementing this recommendation requires time and effort from already overworked and understaffed displaced homemaker programs. However, it remains an unfortunate reality today that staffs must concentrate not only on running programs but also on funding them.

How successful should an individual program operator expect to be in this effort? To a certain extent, success depends on local circumstances as much as any individual's effort. That is because so much of JTPA operates as the law intended it should, by being genuinely under the control of the local SDA and PIC. The implications of this are clear.

One Ohio program operator describes the situation this way: "We are working with 2 SDAs since counties in our school district are served by different SDAs. We are AMAZED at the differences in services offered, interpretation of regulations, and cooperation."
For some service providers, like this one from Pennsylvania, the situation is problematic: "I am frustrated with and disgusted by the difficulty in getting information from the PIC, lack of response to or interest in possible cooperation. I will keep trying to break through this, but am not optimistic!" In contrast is this report from an Oregon program: "Local office is cooperative. Good possibility of doing a project with them." In sum, it is the responsibility of program operators to try to achieve good working relationships with their PICs and PIC staffs, but this will be more or less easily accomplished depending upon the nature of their local circumstances.

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The Displaced Homemakers Network is the only national organization which addresses the specific concerns of displaced homemakers. Through its Washington office, it works to increase displaced homemakers' options for economic self-sufficiency, to provide information about the public policy issues which affect displaced homemakers, to provide technical assistance resources for service providers and to help program staff around the country locate the information and expertise they need to develop programs that work for displaced homemakers.

Network members include traditional service providers and displaced homemaker centers, state and federal agencies, equity specialists, private industry councils, community colleges, vocational/technical institutes, employers, personnel directors, legislative offices, policymakers and opinion leaders, professionals from fields related to displaced homemakers, women's advocates, activists in the field of aging and displaced homemakers themselves.

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